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From: McCave, Emily Prof. <Emily.McCave@quinnipiac.edu>
Sent: Tuesday, March 05, 2019 12:52 PM
To: LABTestimony
Subject: Public Testimony for HB 7292 AN ACT CONCERNING SOCIAL WORKER TITLE PROTECTION

PUBLIC TESTIMONY FOR PUBLIC HEARING MARCH 2019
HB 7292 An Act Concerning Social Worker Title Protection
Labor Committee

Submitted by: Emily McCave, PhD, MSW, LMSW
Resident of Hamden, CT

Dear Members of the Labor Committee,

As your constituent, I'm writing to ask that you support title protection for social workers but also revise the current language for HB 7292 so that it provides title protection for all credentialed social workers in the state of Connecticut, not just those who are licensed. I am asking that you change the language to what has been recommended by the NASW/CT.

As a social worker myself and a professor of social work at Quinnipiac University, I want to ensure that all those who have the title of "Social Worker" are professionally trained and educated to work with diverse populations and are bound by the NASW Code of Ethics, which provides ethical standards to which the public can hold the Social Worker accountable to if needed. This bill will protect vulnerable consumers from receiving sub-standard services and ensuring only professionally trained social workers can hold the title of social worker. Those who attained a degree in social work have gone through a rigorous curriculum in cultural differences, ethical practice, human behavior and therapeutic treatments. They should be able to use the title of "Social Worker" regardless of whether they have a license to practice. Not all positions in the field of social work require a license and those graduating from an accredited BSW program and practicing social work have no option to get licensed in the state of Connecticut. If they cannot call themselves "Social Workers" despite having the BSW degree, why would they stay in our state? We should be providing incentives rather than disincentives to keep those who have graduated from our public and private universities to stay, practice, and contribute to our state.

I fully support statutory title protection for any job that comes with the title of "Social Worker" or any job title that includes the words "Social Worker". The title of "Social Worker" should solely to be used by professionals who hold a BSW or MSW degree from a Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) accredited program or a DSW. Thirty-six states have title protection for the job classification of social workers, including Massachusetts, Vermont, Maine, and New Jersey. Without title protection, consumers have no protection or regulatory recourse to file a complaint against a social worker by title only.

Additionally, state law recognizes the confidentiality and privilege of social work records and communications between the social worker and the client. But such rights, which belong to the client, may not be in effect if the "social worker" is not a professional social worker. It is both an unfair burden on the client and unreasonable expectation to expect a client to know if their social worker is indeed a professional social worker. Without title protection, anyone could be called a social worker in Connecticut. There is nothing to stop a worker who harmed a consumer in another state to repeat that offense in Connecticut. Misuse of the social work title is not only a form of misrepresentation by the worker, but also the employer. Title protection would prevent employers from advertising false services.

Lastly, other professions would not stand for the misuse of their title by a person with sub-substandard qualifications, *why should Social Work be any different?* In many other consumer care professions, individuals who have not attained certain formal training cannot refer to themselves as a member of such profession. Under existing state law, nursing, medicine, psychology, law, physical therapy, massage therapy, all require the appropriate degree to use the title.

I appreciate your time in reading this and hope that you will revise the language to include all credentialed social workers and support this critical bill.

Sincerely,

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